

## Before You Say I Do Session 5

### By Mark Lee

Mark Lee:

I must assume that you have your questions before you, and we'll try to move through them. We have 18 to finish. We've never done 18 in one day this week. I don't know whose fault it is. I think it's the one one who's recording the information. But nevertheless, if you take a look at your questions and I'll repeat them for those of you who do not have any copies before you and let's see what we can do. We ended up yesterday with the question, Are you flexible? The flexibility of a great many people is almost nonexistent.

And if that's true, you're going to have an unhappy time in modern marriage, in my opinion, because there are so many different things that are required of you as you go along the way, especially when two people are working, doing the same kind of job or doing jobs at the same time, and you have to cover various chores in your home, et cetera. You're going to have to make some kind of adjustment in my opinion. Some people are not flexible enough to do that.

Number 32. Do you share the same interests? The word that you ought to apply there is the word mutuality. I am more and more persuaded that mutuality is a major issue in marriages. Now we use other words. Here I've said, do you share the same interests? I say, do you have mutuality? Another way of putting it, which is very popular in your generation, can you share? If this person, for example, enjoys bowling, do both of you enjoy bowling? If this person enjoys music, do both of you enjoy music? If this person likes going to Church, do both of you enjoy going to Church?

There is no question in my mind that too little perception is given to the concept of mutuality before the wedding, and much attention is given to it after the wedding. I go back to one of the things that I told you earlier in the week, and that is simply this opposites attract and after marriage, opposites repel. For some reason, we like being a part of someone who may have had a different acculturation than we have had beforehand. And then after marriage, lo and behold, all of those differences begin to become very stark to us.

Now what do you do when you find out after you're married that there is not as much mutuality as you hope? In my opinion, a great many people survive because they simply have an ability to accept. Acceptance is one of the best ways in which you cover the weaknesses that you're going to confront in your marriage. Acceptance. Now I think another thing is simply the adaptations that individuals have.

For example, I know a man who very much enjoyed sports, and his wife hates them. She wouldn't know one sport from another. I used to say this about my wife, that we went to see one of the Giants baseball game and since my wife went along, we arrived late, of course. I just put that in and we got there the last part of the first inning, and Willie Maize was on third base in the 7th inning. He had a three bagger again, my wife got up and started walking out.

Where are you going? This is where we came in, just because Willie Maze was on third base twice in the same game. Now, the point that I'm making is what do you do when you have someone who is very interested in one thing, let's say sports. I'm thinking of family now. And the wife was deeply committed to music. Well, they were smart enough to put the thing together. So

that while he was watching his favorite team on television, she was the other end of the house practicing the piano. But if people are immature, it will go something like this. I've actually dealt with people like this.

Or he will say, he'll commonly say, when I come home, she insists on doing this and I say to her, how long has he gone? Well, he's gone at least 8 hours for his job, plus travel time. And I said, well, now, why can't you do that during the 8 hours? But I'm going to do it when I want to do it. Well, right away she's revealing something about herself. You can do almost anything you want to do if I can put it this way on your own time. But when you have a mutual time together, try to find those things that you can share.

It utterly amazes me. This woman insisted on ironing at a certain time and her husband enjoyed very much to have her with him for these occasions. She always had to iron on that occasion. Actually, he wanted to go to Church with him, but she couldn't go to Church on that weeknight service that he liked to attend because she had to iron that night. She always ironed on Wednesday evening, but it made no sense to me at all because there were so many other times when she could have done that.

But she felt that he was really not considerate because he pressured her to go with him on those Wednesday night meetings and she had to iron. Obviously, it was a problem that she had to resolve. But take a sharp, sharp look at the whole business of mutuality. I see a lot of divorces. This one woman was very much interested in horses. Her husband didn't care about horses, but they got married anyway. And then finally, of course, in her interest in horses, she finally found

somebody wanted to marry her who liked horses, so she divorced the first man because he didn't like horses, married the second man because he liked horses. And I imagine they're horsing around.

Number 33. What is your attitude toward household chores? Only if you're a marriage counselor will you find some of the problems that are faced and for some reason, partly the society and partly the way we talk. I'm only a housewife, which is one of the worst phrases you could ever possibly use. Men complain as much as anything else about the way their homes are kept, and some of them are dismal. I've had people complain about this, that and the other thing. One of the most common complaints for men is the way the house is kept. Sometimes the beds are unmade. Sometimes the meals are simply not prepared, and all the rest of it.

It's amazing how people somehow avoid the responsibilities of household chores. And the same thing is true for the men. I've actually worked with couples where the man has not mowed the lawn in the fall of the season. And so you wade through the hay to get up to the front door. And this has on occasion it's been literal where the individual simply are unwilling to do those things. We already know from studies that the environment of your home has a lot to do with your attitudes, with your sense of success, with your sense of self-worth. Therefore, if I'm talking to a couple and she doesn't really like household chores, or if he doesn't, the burden tends to rest more on her than on him.

If they do not like household chores, they ought to take a double look about what they're doing and whether or not the future is going to be assured for them. Because your home is indeed your

castle, and what you do there is going to determine a great deal about how your children are going to respond to you and ultimately prepare themselves for marriage. I remember one couple when we were talking, and sometimes I realized I've got to see them in their home. So I go to their home. I walked into the home and I said, now show me around. And so if she had known I was coming, I'm sure she would change things.

But I was invited by the husband because she denied a lot of stuff. And so I was invited and I walked in with him and she looked a little surprised. She wasn't overcome and she knew I was her friend anyway. And so we went through the house. Every drawer but one in the bureaus were pulled out. And so I simply said to her, I said, Why do you leave all the bureau drawers pulled out? She says, It saves time. And I said, what do you mean it saves time? She says, Well, I can go and pull it right out without bothering to look because it's all out there. And I said, okay.

I said, Now I have trouble believing that. She says, what do you mean? I said, that only works if the top drawer has what you want, because you're going to have to push in that drawer to get what's in the next drawer. Push that in to get what's in the next drawer. I dare say that you probably pull or push as many drawers as you would if they were all closed and you went for them. She sat down and figured that out. That's right. So she decided to close the bureau drawers. He had begged her to do it, but hadn't worked it out in a logical kind of way. I wish my wife were here this morning because I like her to tell the story.

We're first married, invariably at night the dishes would be piled in the sink. And I was trying to figure that out because that just griped my soul. And the reason why was my mother always

washed the dishes right after the meal. So we never had dishes in the sink. And the worst thing you can do is tell your wife, my mother doesn't do it that way. But one day I loved her. And if I had to live the rest of my life that way, that's the way I was going to do it, really. Acceptance is a wonderful thing, especially when you don't get what you want. There it was.

One day I got the idea and I said, Honey, I've come to realize as I'm working with couples that lazy people on any issue, that lazy people on any issue have to do the same things that industrious people do. They only do them a day later. And then she figured it out. That's true. She had to do the dishes anyway. She'd do them the next day. Then the next day she'd do yesterday's dishes. Next day she'd do the previous day's dishes. And she said, that was terribly persuasive. And now my wife, I mean, the house is just manicured just the way I like. I'm fortunate to get it that way without going through a divorce.

The point that I'm trying to make is that keeping your home is going to have a lot to do with the way you feel and the way you feel ultimately about yourself. Most women who are poor housekeepers, most men who do not do well with their homes, feel a sense of the guilts all the time. And they're always making excuses. So you know that it's on the back burner of their minds. And sometimes, of course, it becomes very severe. This poor woman sat there, two of them on two different occasions.

The first one said, Would you help me to get him to recognize that this is our home and that if I'm going to keep it the way it ought to be kept, he's going to have to cooperate? And I says, well, what does he do wrong? She says, well, he leaves the motorcycle in the kitchen. She

actually had to go around the motorcycle to serve her meal. And I said, Is there any good thing that he does? She says, he puts a pan under the sprocket, which meant that he wouldn't let oil drip on her floor. But he brought the motorcycle in there. And while they were having dinner, he'd look at his motorcycle and once or twice got up and polished some spot off the motorcycle.

Another one, believe it or not, put the motorcycle in the bedroom. And when he got out of bed, he had to go over the motorcycle to the bathroom. Some of these things for you or for me unbelievable, but if I told you all of them, you'd say, hey, you're making those up. By the way, they are so interesting, I couldn't possibly have made them up. They really do happen. You're going to have to work at it. The next thing I talk about is what do you expect of him? And then what do you expect of her?

And this sometimes comes out as one of the most surprising exchanges because she never knew that that's what he expected. He never knew that that's what she expected. And it tended to grow out of his life and out of her life. Sometimes this gets to be almost the longest question that we deal with. It depends on how deeply they've thought and how they respond.

Number 35, do you wish to grow old with this changing person? Two things strike young people. One is that you're going to grow old. It's kind of the idea. No, I don't want to, but that's not going to change things at all. You are going to get old. And by the way, you're going to be old a lot longer than you're young, so you better get ready for it. I mean, if God is good to you, when someone asks you, what do you think about getting old? When you think of the alternative, it's

not so bad. Death is the only alternative to getting old. So how do you like growing old with this changing person?

So growing old, they'd like to resist that. And the other is they'd like to resist change. We say that we like change, but when you get right down to it, we want everyone else to change without our changing. And by the way, you can talk with people and they'll talk very positively about change. But the moment that change begins to take place, they're threatened by it. For example, we discovered that the only way that we're permitted in the city to do any building, the same thing would be for La Mirada. If you wanted to build a new building here at the College, they've got to ask the people in the community how they respond.

The people community would probably come into this auditorium and so the plans would be presented and what the impact on the community would be and whether or not there would be additional traffic along the streets. This is now the law. And let us suppose that the people in the community says that's fine, we're supportive of Biola College. We think that this is what you want to do, and you just go right ahead. But the moment you start doing it, even the people that voted for the change began to be threatened. In other words, even approved change is threatening. Therefore, be very careful when you bring about changes in the course of your family.

And by the way, change is inevitable. What we tend to live with is a bit of change, as long as you don't speed it up too fast. Don't try to speed it up too fast. Make sure that whatever change comes comes in normal order predicted as far in advance as you can find out whether or not you're

going to be able to cope with that kind of change. It's a bit more than perhaps you've thought of at the moment.

Number 36, by the way, interrupt me. I mean that in all seriousness, so I can respond for your special question, but I'll move along unless you say otherwise. Do you identify one success and or failure as a success and or failure for both? Now what you ought to put there is make sure you use the plural pronouns. Use the plural pronouns. That's not my car. That's our car. That's not my job. That's our job. That's not my house. That's our house. That's not my son. That's our son. You need to understand that persons who tend to work as a unit in a family are going to be happier in the result than those who think of themselves separate from their families.

Now I think that that is terribly important to understand and try to apply in your experience.

Therefore, I fully think that any success that I've had in my life is a success that's been given to me partly by my wife. Now I'm not so sure that I want to lay the failures over her. But it's interesting that whatever we do, whatever we do, we do it together, and we ought to sense it together and sense that kind of responsibility. But if you think so independently in your relationship, in your marriage, that the success that you feel is only yours, then in my opinion, you're in some difficulty. You've lost the concept of being together.

Number 37, how will you handle each other's contradictions? Now you're going to contradict yourself. He's going to say to you, all right, next Saturday at 03:00, we're going shopping. If there's anything that a wife seems to appreciate on occasion is that her husband will go shopping with her, not so much grocery shopping, because she knows if he goes grocery shopping with

her, the bill is going to be much higher than it would be if she does it. Men are impulse buyers and you'll end up at home with pickled grasshoppers and that kind of thing, impulse buyers. And the wife knows that she can get through that Safeway and come out of the other end for \$20.

If her husband goes, it's going to be \$40. But nevertheless, there are times when she likes him to go along, especially whenever they're shopping, say, at Christmas or something like that, and they can do this together. But if it's something that he hasn't done very often, he probably will say to her, at 03:00 on Saturday, I'm going shopping with you. At 03:00 on Saturday, he says, I don't want to go, but you promised. And before you know it, you're going to have that kind of tension. You ought to assume, put this down somewhere. You ought to assume that you're going to contradict yourself and don't let that tear you up.

The individual is going to say, I'm going to do it. And by the way, I get a twinge of irritation, because if I say I'm going to do it, I'm going to do it. And then as we get close to it, my wife says, now, are you going to do that? I said, I said I was. And she said, Well, I say that I am too. But when I get closer, sometimes I don't want to do it. And I said, but if I say that I'm going to do it, I'm going to do it. I suppose I'm driven that way. But don't be surprised at all with the contradictions that occur in the family. They say they're going to do it. They don't do it. They say they're not going to do it. They do it.

You can become irritated by that, or you can recognize that that's just plain human nature. And by the way, the more leisure we have in our lives, the more we tend to contradict ourselves as we go along. Learn to tolerate those contradictions without permitting them to tear you up. You

don't love me because I don't shop with you at 03:00 on Saturday afternoon. That's no reason to say that I don't love you. The contradictions are going to be there. Now what's going to really hurt, I've suggested earlier under another context, is that here you've promised to take her out on Friday. She's got everything done, perhaps even gone through the grooming process, got her hair done or something, may have a new gown for the occasion, and she's expecting flowers from you tonight.

This is your big anniversary. You've been married for eleven days, and whatever it is, and then the call comes and you're not going to make it. Now you just feel terrible. Now, by the way, if a person does that 15 times in a row, I don't blame her for being irritated. But if you can't make the kinds of adjustments, as I suggested earlier, in flexibility and you don't interpret that as a contradiction, it wasn't really meant that way, then you're going to do a better job. Number 38, do you believe in careful, sensitive listening?

Now, this could take all the rest of our time if we wanted to take the time. But there are four levels of listening, and you want to take those levels in the order in which they appear. Let's see. Can you see that? No, I can't. All right. There it is. The first level of listening is always social. And this goes in a family as well as in an office. The first level of listening is always social. Good morning. Hi, great to see you. And by the way, no matter how many students I've worked with in communications, when I asked them about social listening, they almost always put it down, despite the fact that this is number one and it must precede all of the kinds of listening.

For example, the most common complaint I don't know if you read the Agony columns or not, but Anne Landers says that the most common complaint she gets from secretaries is that the boss comes in in the morning and doesn't speak to her, and he goes away at night after the day's work, and he doesn't speak to her. As a result, she feels like he thinks she's an extension of the typewriter. So it's terribly important to say Hi, good morning. And by the way, don't be surprised if the answers are lies. For example, you say to someone, hey, how are you? And you only want one answer, what is it? Fine. He may be dying on his feet, but if you say, hey, how are you? And he said, now let me tell you, you wish you didn't ask.

So if you don't want to tell a little white lie like, fine, when you've got a headache and you feel like you're falling apart, then say, good morning, I'll talk to you later, or some such thing. Social listening is recognizing a person, is there, and there's something beautiful about that. Really is. The second kind of listening. And this is terribly important, terribly important in a family is therapeutic, therapeutic. The next kind of listening is listen to find out if the person is hurting. Is that person hurting? Listen for that next.

Always believe that when someone talks to you in a serious way that you must hear two messages. You must hear two messages, the message that's impinging on the ear and the message that impinges on the heart. And once you learn to do that, that is an absolutely fabulous talent when the person will sit there and do that. I was once the Dean of a College, and I had the responsibility for the academic budget. And a fellow came in in the morning, a member of the faculty, and said he wanted a \$500 raise.

Now, I know that when someone asked me for a \$500 raise, there's something else. I know there's something else. So I listened long enough, and he discovered there was someone else on the faculty that had the same training, that he had, the same length of service that he had teaching in the same Department as he was with the same position, the same status that he had, and that felt was making \$500 a year more. So he was not asking me for a \$500 raise. What he was asking me for in the second message was status, and you've got to deal with that.

Now he did not know that I couldn't give him a \$500 raise because the budget had been closed by the President. Was not going to be presented by the trustees. It had been closed three days before. The President told me, everything is done, it's buttoned up, and there was no way that I could do that. In the afternoon, lo and behold, another prof came and asked for a \$500 raise. And by the way, I know that that's not all I've got to hear. Why is he asking for the \$500 raise? I've got to hear that message. It turned out that his daughter had to have orthodonty and he felt that if he had a \$500 raise, he could pay for that during the year.

Now, again, if I'm a good administrator, I'm not going to say to him, hey, the President has a buttoned up, there's nothing I can do for you. Sorry. And he goes out an unhappy man. How can I get him to go out of there happy? In the morning if I listen therapeutically, if I listen therapeutically, I told the man in the morning, hey, I'm going to take another look at your dossier. And if you're right and there's an inequity, I'll make sure that it's recommended that inequity will be made up to you next year. He went out a happy man, but that only came in the second message. How can I heal his feelings?

In the afternoon, you can't give raises to people based on an emergency in the family because someone else is going to come along and say, hey, we're doing all the same jobs, and that's not the way you determine what people make. But I had a little loan fund that had been provided for such emergencies. Not only did I use the loan fund, but I said to him, I imagine that's going to cost you a lot more than that. He says, yes, about somewhere between 1,500 and 2,000 dollars. I said, why don't you permit us to loan you the money interest free, and then you pay it back over this period of time. He was happier with that than a \$500 raise.

Are you following me? You may hear your wife say something, your husband say something. But if you insist on listening long enough to get the second message and there's always a second message, always an emotional message that is related to it, you're listening therapeutically. Most of us are unwilling to do that. Here's somebody that says something and we interpret as being harsh. And all the time that individual may be all churned up inside. And if we listen to find out why he's talking that way, why she's talking that way, what's happening then?

Then, something's going to happen that is really worth happening. As far as the happiness of that family is concerned. The third level of listening is for facts. In other words, you're listening for instruction. You're listening to find out what the facts of the case are. Now notice you don't get to number three until you've gone through one and two. Social listening. Hey, I see you. I appreciate you. You're equal with me. I'm equal with you. Therapeutic. You're hurting, and I hear what you're saying when you hurt. Then instruction gives me the facts of the case. What are the facts of the case which lead to the last and the highest level of listening? And that is evaluative or critical, depending on which word you like to use. Critical listening.

Now, the trouble is that most people like to be listened to on levels one, two, and even three before you get to four. And some people don't even like four. They don't have the strength to accept four. I'm sorry, I'm doing a bad job of it. They don't have the strength to accept four. But unless you subject yourself to evaluation of what you're doing and evaluation of what you're saying, then you have robbed yourself of the best of whatever it is that you're doing. So remember those four levels of listening and do not go to four immediately. Our tendency is to want other people to be sent to us, but we go right directly to evaluative or critical listening without going through one, two, and three.

If the families could understand three levels of listening before critical listening, you can be sure of this. They're going to do a great deal more for each other. Okay. Most of us do not have the patience for it. We haven't learned how to listen, despite the fact that most of communication, of all of the elements of communication, listening requires more time than any other. In fact, it almost requires as much time 45% according to the authorities. 45% of our communicating time is spent in listening. 55% is spent in the other three aspects that's writing and reading and speaking. And listening takes almost as much time as those three together, and yet we're not very good at it. So I'm encouraging you to become a better listener if your family life is going to become what it ought to become.

Number 39. Do you believe in talking over matters and sharing in decision making for the family? There are those who think that because you're the head of the family, you're becoming autocrat. I just don't believe that you ought to talk it over. One couple sat there and she said, he bought a tire for the car, and he didn't talk to me about it. And I said, okay, now let's see. Do you

really think he ought to talk to you about it? Don't you think so? I said, My wife would never think that I should talk to her about buying a tire for the car unless we were so short of funds that it made a difference about whether or not there was going to be food on the table or the insurance policy was going to be paid for or some other thing.

So I said, now you've got to tell me, did his purchase of the tire for the car make any difference at all in the budget that you need to run the house? She said, no. I said, Why shouldn't you talk about it? But there are people who have the feeling that you ought to talk about everything. I mean, you ought to resonate on everything. Dear friends, if that's true, you're going to come, in my opinion, under such a legalistic kind of marriage that it's not going to be happy at all. I don't expect my wife to talk to me about everything that she's going to do unless it impinges upon the goals that we've set, unless it impinges on the goals that we've set.

At the same time, I want to make sure we sit down, talk about the children, talk about our lives, talk about our spiritual development, our social development. But when it gets down to that woman being absolutely irritated that her husband didn't talk to her about the tire, well, then later I asked her what she knew about tires, but she didn't know anything about tires. And I said, Why should we talk? Well, we ought to talk about everything. Oh, nonsense. I hope that you're mature enough to let her let her make the decisions where they make the difference and him make the decisions where they make the difference as long as it doesn't impinge on each other's commitments relative, say, to the budget of the home.

Number 40. What is your language style? I want to talk to the men for a moment. For some reason, the guys I'm talking about Christian guys. Now, for some reason, because of what's happened in the media where you're using the four letter words on radio and television, you're using them in the newspaper and magazines. Now, a lot of the fellows have picked it up and are using this kind of language. I think it's unfortunate. I don't think it's going to add a thing to your marriage. The women haven't done it nearly so much as Christian men. I've actually had a fellow, whenever I was raising this in a communication seminar, he raised his hand. I said, yes. Or he says, well, it doesn't mean any more than Darner Heck used to mean.

I made reference to that earlier, and I said, no, wait a moment. That shows a misunderstanding about what communication is all about. When you get all the way up to the top, you run out of words. When you get all the way down to the bottom, you run out of words. There's a lot of flexibility in between. And he says, Well, I don't believe that. I said, all right, let's talk about up at the top of the language. One of the problems with Hollywood is that it's exhausted the top of the language. For example, they come out with a film and they call it colossal. The next one come out, they call it super colossal.

And after a while it's super colossal colossal. And by the way, I recently took a piece out of the San Francisco paper in which they said that Hollywood has become the epitome of ignorance about super colossalness, whatever that is. And after a while it's got to be super colossal colossal. Why? Because you run out of language. So when you get to the bottom of the heap, you run out of language. And he says, I don't understand that. I said, all right, let us just suppose for a moment that you want to tell someone to go to hell. How do you do it? While he stood there for a

moment, it struck him, that's right. When you get the bottom of the language, there's no place down to go.

And he looked at me, he smiled. He says, you have to say it louder. Well, now, if the only way you're going to determine that you're going to use that language that's down there at the bottom by saying it louder, I think you're on pretty weak ground. Dear friends, let your Yay be Yay and your nay, nay. I have sat talking to couples where they start in on the four letter words, and I have for the first time to see that solve any problem. For the very first time. So if you're beginning to let your language get a little bit sloppy because the whole society has decided that it can use this inconvenient language, at best, inconvenience, then I think you're going to have some problems in your marriage. But I'm talking to Christian collegians now, and lo and behold, I'm just utterly disappointed that they do not recognize what they're doing with their language.

Number 41. Do you believe that in counselors to help you solve personal problems? The male ego is such that in most instances the man will say early in the problem, we can solve it ourselves. That's the most common response to a marital problem. We can solve it ourselves. I think that every man and every woman, when they go into marriage, ought to be promised that they have independent choice on calling on two people. One is a physician and the other is a counselor. A physician and a counselor. That's terribly important. That is terribly important that the individual has a right to make inquiry to any physician about a health matter.

And they have any right to inquire of a counselor when something begins to go wrong. Almost always in the course of a marriage, a third sensitive objective party is going to be needed, and

oftentimes the man will deny it, and then it goes too far. And now the woman wants out. And now he says, let's go for counseling. After the horse has been stolen, now he's willing to close the door. I have seen this happen over and over again where one or the other, usually the man, with that horrible male ego that we've got, gentlemen, usually the man will say, I don't want anybody else to be in on this. And then when it's too late and he's trying to save his marriage and he wants to go to counseling, then she has no will to go.

So make sure that you decide this early in your experience that if we get into a little bit of difficulty, we're going to go for counseling. I'm now working with a couple, and they've been married 13 years. They're going to have a divorce. And I asked in asking her what the trouble was, she says, it's been coming on for ten years. But see, she's got to take enormous blame even if her husband didn't function quite the way he ought to function. She's got to take enormous blame because she never revealed at all that any of this was a problem to her. What happened is and this often happens with people of a certain nature. It's like a pressure cooker.

The pressure keeps going up and you look at the pressure. This happened once in our home. My wife was making chili in a pressure cooker. And if you're looking at the pressure cooker, everything looked fine. The thing went right out. The safety valve. Spread all over the kitchen. I've never had something. It was on the ceiling, chili on the ceiling, which is the worst place in the world for it to be. And a lot of people are like that, just little things. And in fact, the week before the breakup, someone could say, boy, when it comes to a model marriage, they've got it. And next week you hear they're getting a divorce. You say, how could that happen?

The answer is it's built up. Little things just build up. If they had an agreement that when we get into a kind of irritation, we will go to a counselor. You can be sure of this. In most instances, the whole thing would have been worked out. Don't let your ego keep you from getting help. That's the important thing to understand. Don't let your ego keep you away. What are your personal and family goals? Well, I've spoken on goals. I have a book on it. I hope you'll pick it up or borrow it from the library and get some of the outline perceptions so that you can build goals for your life. It's interesting that goal oriented people seldom break up as compared to non goal oriented people.

They work together. They say, this is what we want to do, and they begin to move in that direction. It's impressive how companies or families or individuals get on so well. When they have some gold, they know where they're going and they simply formulate a map so they can get to their destination from here. So begin to develop goals. They're very exciting. By the way, the big thing to understand about goals and I understand this often with young marriage, and that is that they end up with conflicting goals. I'll take a minute if I can, to show this. Don't get conflicting goals.

I was working with one young couple, for example, and she had four goals that she wanted very much wanted. And as I was working with them, I said, you can't have all of those, not at your age and what you're doing. Now, see, what happened was that they were influenced by the goals of others. I'll quickly give the goals that she was talking about. One was education. She wanted her husband to finish his education and he was going for a doctor's degree. So number one was education.

Number two was whether or not to have a baby. They wanted to have a family. So the next goal was to set the time they were going to have a family. The third goal was to buy a house and the fourth goal was to buy a car. Now, what order should you take those in? What comes 1st, 2nd, 3rd, 4th? You can't tell. You've got to work with a couple to find out. And by the way, one of the reasons why they were in difficulty was that down deep they had number one goal was to have a baby. Down deep number two goal was to finish his education. But their best friends had decided to delay baby and delay education, buy a house and an automobile. And she was jealous of that. She was jealous of that.

So what she decided was let's keep our goals and add their goals for our goals. And so she ended up with conflicting goals. The conflicting goals is because the education costs money, the baby costs money, the house costs money, the car costs money, and there's not that many resources. So what I had to do was to talk them into deciding what two primary goals they go for and what goals they were willing to delay. And by the way, the wife in this case was unwilling to delay them and the marriage is breaking up.

It's terrible. She says, Well, I want all of these goals. I said, you can't have them all. You've got to have a practical perception of deciding what priority you're going to take. And then if there are resources left over the next priority, resources left over the next priority. And I said, in a period of years, you're going to have them all, but you can't have them all at once. And she's unwilling to accept that. So she's finally decided that she's going to split. And I don't see how she can get all of those goals if she splits because she needs her husband for one and two, because that was terribly important to it. And of course, obviously biologically.

But now she's decided that she's going to have her house and her car. And it doesn't make any difference what happens to the rest of her family. By the way, they had gone for one and two. They even have two children. She's leaving those children with her husband. Absolutely unreal to me, but that's the way of it. All right. What are your goals?

Number 43. When did you have a physical check up? If I truly love my wife, I don't want her to find out after we're married that I'm not well, almost invariably, when this couples in love and they find out that there's some problem. And it's amazing what's discovered. This one couple found out she had hemophilia. She was a carrier of hemophilia. And he says, I love her anyway. We're just not going to have children. We're going to get married. But afterwards, what do you suppose if this man had thought in the terms of having children, they got married, and then she tells them that she has hemophilia? I think if you love that person enough, you want to let that person know what the state of your health is. And so I asked them to respond to that.

Number 44, where do you plan to go to Church, by the way, if time permitted, I talk about some unusual circumstances. I had a couple. He belonged to the Dutch Reform Church and she belonged to the Assemblies of God. I was speaking at one of our summer conferences, and they said, Would you help us with this? I said, sure. And they said, Tonight, after the service? I said, yes, tonight after the service. I got up to speak. It was at Mount Herman up in Santa Cruz Mountains. And there he sat with his mother and father and his pastor, pastor's wife and some members of the family.

There she sat with her mother, father, pastor, pastor's wife, and some sisters over on the other side. And when I finished, I simply called her by name. And I called him by name and asked them to come here alone. I said this right in the auditorium. So they did. I said, hey, don't get me into this. I said, you got a lovely pastor, lovely pastor, great parents. All I can tell you is that you're going to have to find some halfway house in between. Some halfway house. There's just so many differences in your background.

One background is good, the other background is good. I have no argument about that. But you're going to have to decide. And it's probably not going to be an Assembly Church. It's probably not going to be a Dutch Reformed Church. It's going to be something in between. And they looked at me and said, Are you willing to help us through this? I said, what does that mean, meeting with your parents and pastors? And they said, well, no. And I said, okay, I'll help you, but I'm not going to argue with them.

There's no sense in it. Each one thought that the couple ought to go their way, and it's going to have to be a decision that they're going to have to make. How will you treat religious differences between you? I have seen couples fight because one of them thought the baby ought to be baptized, because if the baby is not baptized, what if he died? I'm not sure what God is concerned about whether or not the baby's wet or dry if he dies, but he'll probably be wet in some way or another.

But the point that I'm trying to make is that it was terribly important to her. He said that he wanted to wait till the child was grown and made his decision for the Lord was baptized. And

they looked at me and asked what I thought. I said, hey, I believe in immersion. But if this was my wife, I said to him, and that meant that much to her, I would let her have the baby baptized, if that is her perception of it, with the understanding that as the baby grows up, I can present my point of view in a friendly, kindly way.

And finally, that's what they decided to do. And by the way, that little boy grew up, and when he was about 10, 11 years old, he came up to me and he said, hey, I'm a Christian. I said, that's fine, son, and I'm glad you told me. He says, you know why I told you? And I said, Why? He said, Because my dad said that when I became a Christian and if I wanted to be baptized, you would baptize me. And so I did. It was in Olympia, Washington. I'll never forget it. It was wonderful.

Are you willing to leave each other to God? Why should you stand there and bicker, bicker, bicker, bicker. God never meant for his word or his Church to become a divisive element between you. Leave each other to God. If one of them believes one doctrine, you believe another doctrine, just leave it to God and the individual, because there's no reason for this. I worked with a couple in Abbotsford, British Columbia, and the woman will no longer have anything to do with her husband because she wanted to go to that Church, and he wanted to go to this Church, and because he wouldn't go to that Church with her, and he was going to go to this Church, they have no marriage left over the Church, which God meant for them to have as a blessing.

Do you understand leadership? Not dominance, not subjugation, but leadership. Leadership means you're out in front, you look over your shoulder, there's your wife, you look over your other shoulder. There are your children. That's leadership. More to be said there, but I leave it to

you. Do you recognize your equality before God? Men and women are equal before God. Start with Galatians 3:28. If you doubt it, take a sharp look at that.

Number 49, do your parents and friends favor the marriage? If I find parents do not favor the marriage, I always tell them one thing and only one, and that is delay for a little bit. Show your respect for your parents by simply delaying it and saying, hey, we're committed to each other. We believe that God wants us to be married. We're sorry that you don't go wrong. But to prove to you that we want to respect you, delay it. And if you delay it a month, two months, even as much as six months, they will recognize that you're serious and perhaps they'll come on board. I had this problem recently. He was a member of another race than she was. And the father, they lived in Oregon would not give her away in marriage.

And I contacted the parents and I told them they were in counseling and I hope that they would understand that and would respond to the children. The couple then I said, offered to delay it and they offered to do it. The parents then saw the respect that was shown. And the day before the wedding, the father went to his daughter and said, I'll give you away. And it was very cheerful kind of thing because everyone knew that the father was so against it. And they have a beautiful marriage, beautiful marriage. But you need to recognize that these parents do have some concern.

And then 50, have you made all the arrangements for the wedding? Terribly important. I always remind them beforehand that whatever happens, you're going to get away from here married despite mothers and grandmothers, you're going to get away from here married. And on the

practice night, sometimes it's dismal. You can't believe this happy couple can get involved in all these things. Their mother, she thinks the wedding ought to be this way. You ought to walk down this way. You ought to have these people standing over here. You ought to have them standing up there. And I always remind, first of all, the groom, the wedding belongs to the bride.

You get away with murder for the next 50 years. Let her have this night. And I remind her that if we get married up by the staple of the Church, you're going to be married and you're going to go away from here with what you're after. And that is the marriage. Now the thing is to deal with her mother and her grandmother. And usually the best thing to do is to put it in, to have great reliance on the pastor and ask him certain kinds of things. And if he is wise, he will always go to the bride and get her wishes. It's amazing what can happen. Absolutely amazing. And sometimes a marriage never recovers from it because we are so silly.

We think we're intelligent human beings, but we're so silly. By all means, make sure that all the preparations are made, all the understandings are clear. In advance and do all of the things that count. It's not always easy, but it's important. And when you go through your counseling, make sure that that's done well. There's so much more to be said. I hope you have the great, good wisdom of buying how to have a good marriage. There you get the last word. There's nothing more to be said on it. Let's have prayer, shall we?

Lord, we pray that you will bless our lives. Bless our future. Bless the couples who are committing themselves to each other for the glory of God, God and for service to Christ and for their own joy that you'll be there for Jesus' sake. Amen.